

FOR INFORMATION

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY Senate Graduate Studies Committee

S. 88-12
As amended
by Senate
11/04/88

Report to Senate

February 1988

The Dean of Graduate Studies is responsible for the general supervision of graduate work at the University and is Chairman of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee. This report outlines the position of graduate studies at Simon Fraser University, describes some changes made in the 1987/88 year and makes recommendations for future directions.

I. Enrollments and Degrees

Table I shows the recent history of graduate enrollments and degrees granted. It is taken from the 1987 S.F.U. Fact Book which will contain more detailed breakdowns by department and Faculty.

The FTE enrollment figures must be treated with caution. The process for determining them is subject to considerable variation among departments and is often based on incomplete information on a student's activities. In consultation with the Director of Analytical Studies, Walter Wattamaniuk, I am working on a more consistent and logical scheme for determining FTE enrollments.

II. Degree Completion

Table II is a survey of the times required by S.F.U. students to earn their graduate degrees. The data are from the Graduate Studies Database system. The corresponding figures from last year's report are also shown. I am very pleased to note a small but significant decrease in average completion times. It should be noted that these data do not take into account the possibility that a student may have been enrolled part-time for all or part of the program and thus may overstate completion times, especially for programs with large numbers of part-time students. Data on enrolment status may be found in the S.F.U. Fact Book.

I remain concerned by what appear in many cases to be excessive times for degree completion. I have appended a statement issued by the Canadian Association of Graduate Schools expressing their concerns in this area. When resources are limited, it is especially important that they be used effectively.

I am actively encouraging departments to ensure both that their degree requirements are realistic and that their students make satisfactory progress, as required by Senate regulations, toward meeting those requirements. I am also considering more rigorous enforcement of the regulations requiring annual progress reports.

I am also pressing for timely appointments of supervisory committees. In establishing the Graduate Studies Database, I encountered many students who had been here for several years, yet apparently had no supervisory committees. This situation has largely been remedied; each semester, reminders about 'delinquent' students are sent to Departments by my office; a minor flood of committee recommendations follows.

III. Grades

Table III gives information on the S.F.U. graduate grades of all students enrolled in the Fall 87 semester; it includes courses taken in that semester up to the end of 87-2 and excludes students who had not yet taken an S.F.U. graduate course. In Table IV will be found corresponding data from 1986, for comparison. Data were taken from the Registrar's data files and incorporated into and processed within the Graduate Studies Database system.

For each department, a number of measures of the grade distribution are presented. The weighted CGPA ("Wted") weights each student's CGPA by the number of semester hours completed. The average CGPA ("Aver.") does no weighting, but counts all students equivalently. The median ("Med.") CGPA and the N% CGPA give the CGPA at the median of the distribution and at the Nth percentile. For example, in the third entry of Table III - Business, the top 10% of the students have CGPA of 3.79 or higher, the top 20% have CGPA of 3.62 or higher and so on. It is interesting to note, in comparing Tables III and IV, that there is little evidence for the "grade inflation" that was predicted by some upon the introduction of A-, B+, and B- grades in 86-3.

The tremendous range in the nature of the grade distributions among departments may stem from two causes: (1) differences in grading practices and (2) differences in the abilities of students. I believe that, most likely, it is a mixture of these with the former a larger contributor than the latter. This range is one of the reasons that I have moved away from interdepartmental comparisons of CGPA in the ranking of applicants for S.F.U. graduate scholarships.

IV. Special Arrangements

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee serves as the Graduate Program Committee of students enrolled under Special Arrangements. As its chairman, I have given special attention to these students. With the goal of ensuring their satisfactory progress, I have brought all their supervisory committees into compliance with Senate's regulations and, as of 86-3, require up-to-date progress reports as a condition of registration. To date, the response of students and supervisors has been excellent.

I am pleased to report that the defences of theses completed under Special Arrangements, which I chair, have all been quite successful. Table V provides some data on degree completion. These data are subject to the same caveat about part-time study as the data in Table II.

Historically, Special Arrangements have been a high risk area; students either succeed or fail spectacularly. Numbers of students enrolled have remained roughly constant around 30. Degree completion has been highly variable: 7 in 1987, 6 in 1986, 2 in 1985, 6 in 1984, 1 in 1983, 2 in 1982, and 4 in 1981. Other students have dropped out. By the steps outlined above and by rigorous enforcement of the criteria for entrance into Special Arrangements, I hope to improve the success rate.

At the request of the S.G.S.C., I undertook a review of the Special Arrangements program. The results of that review have been reported to Senate and changes to the program approved by Senate.

V. S.G.S.C. Motions

In Appendix B you will find a compilation of motions considered by the S.G.S.C. since the last report.

VI. Future

I remain optimistic about the future of graduate studies at S.F.U. The quality of most of the thesis defences which I have attended has been high. With rare exception, applicants recommended by departments for entry into Ph.D. programs have been very strong. Through more aggressive recruiting of excellent applicants with the aid of entrance scholarships, more rigorous enforcement of the present requirements for satisfactory progress, and more careful monitoring of student supervision, it should be possible to improve the quality of graduate programs and decrease times for degree completion, thus making more effective use of our limited resources.



B.P. Clayman
Dean of Graduate Studies

TABLE I

SUMMARY DATA

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
Annualized Graduate Enrollment						
Head Count	1243	1355	1414	1419	1377	1366
FTE	937	1054	1137	1153	1125	1084
Master's Degrees Awarded	121	191	208	218	279	214
Ph.D. Degrees Awarded	25	22	30	37	39	42
TOTAL	146	213	238	255	318	256

TABLE II
DEGREE COMPLETION TIMES (SEMESTERS)

		<u>Master's</u>		<u>Ph.D.</u>	
Completion in:		<u>86-3->87-3</u>	<u>85-3->86-3</u>	<u>86-3->87-3</u>	<u>85-3->86-3</u>
ARCH	MA	15.60	13.75	21.80	21.50
BISC	MPM	10.16	10.18	16.00	15.64
"	MSc	11.22	11.36	-	-
BUS	MBA	10.50	10.69	-	-
CHEM	MSc	10.11	8.75	14.33	16.00
CMNS	MA	12.40	10.73	-	11.00
CMPT	MSc	8.79	8.93	13.00	11.00
CRIM	MA	10.57	11.00	-	11.00
DLLL	MA	10.50	8.00	-	-
ECON	MA	6.40	7.00	19.67	18.11
EDUC	MA	11.86	12.34	10.50	8.50
"	MED	11.92	12.09	-	-
"	MSc	10.50	15.00	-	-
ENGL	MA	17.11	14.24	-	20.50
GEOG	MA	11.75	12.50	29.00	27.50
"	MSc	9.33	9.33	-	-
HIST	MA	10.00	14.60	-	14.00
KINE	MSc	9.33	10.86	13.00	-
MAST	MSc	8.31	7.91	13.75	13.50
MRM	MRM	11.44	10.57	-	-
PHYS	MSc	8.31	10.50	12.50	13.60
POL	MA	5.00	13.00	-	-
PSYC	MA	7.22	7.54	16.00	19.30
SA	MA	9.67	15.00	-	-
SAR	MA	7.00	8.33	16.75	18.80
"	MSc	-	19.00	-	-
WS	MA	7.00	6.00	-	-
Average/Number		10.51/273	10.94/361	16.13/49	17.05/64

TABLE III

Summary Data on SFU Graduate Grade Point Averages of Master's and Ph.D. Students Who Have Taken SFU Graduate Courses as of Semester 87-2

Dept	# of Stu.	CGPA 25%	CGPA 20%	CGPA 10%	CGPA Aver.	CGPA Med.	CGPA Wted.
ARCH	29	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.67	3.67	3.65
BISC	111	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.71	3.75	3.69
BUS	74	3.62	3.67	3.79	3.44	3.38	3.42
CHEM	38	3.71	3.75	4.00	3.46	3.50	3.51
CMNS	35	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.74	3.78	3.79
CMPT	53	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.61	3.67	3.64
CRIM	46	3.82	3.93	4.00	3.63	3.71	3.64
DLLL	12	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.88	4.00	3.88
ECON	52	3.53	3.68	3.82	3.37	3.40	3.38
EDUC	277	3.93	4.00	4.00	3.66	3.67	3.67
ENGL	51	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.77	3.83	3.79
ENSC	14	3.78	3.78	3.89	3.48	3.67	3.48
GEOG	28	3.93	4.00	4.00	3.64	3.71	3.67
HIST	24	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.70	3.75	3.73
KIN	31	3.80	3.86	4.00	3.62	3.67	3.61
MAST	42	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.53	3.64	3.60
MRM	29	3.69	3.77	3.83	3.53	3.48	3.54
PHIL	4	3.33	3.33	3.67	3.00	3.00	2.79
PHYS	37	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.63	3.61	3.61
POL	14	3.67	3.67	4.00	3.51	3.67	3.52
PSYC	68	3.93	3.94	4.00	3.73	3.79	3.72
SA	25	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.89	4.00	3.91
SAR	22	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.69	3.77	3.66
WS	8	3.78	3.78	3.89	3.57	3.42	3.60

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TABLE IV

Summary Data on SFU Graduate Grade Point Averages of Master's and Ph.D. Students Who Have Taken SFU Graduate Courses as of Semester 86-2

Dept	# of Stu.	CGPA 25%	CGPA 20%	CGPA 10%	CGPA Aver.	CGPA Med.	CGPA Wted.
ARCH	32	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.73	3.75	3.72
BISC	124	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.66	3.71	3.65
BUS	135	3.50	3.60	3.86	3.37	3.33	3.37
CHEM	47	3.85	4.00	4.00	3.54	3.50	3.56
CMNS	36	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.61	3.67	3.66
CMPT	69	3.83	4.00	4.00	3.53	3.66	3.59
CRIM	50	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.55	3.62	3.53
DLLL	18	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.78	3.89	3.78
ECON	77	3.62	3.67	3.83	3.43	3.43	3.46
EDUC	287	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.67	3.80	3.69
ENGL	60	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.82	4.00	3.82
GEOG	35	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.67	3.71	3.69
HIST	29	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.53	3.74	3.59
KINES	34	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.63	3.80	3.65
MASTA	46	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.53	3.67	3.63
MRM	52	3.78	3.86	4.00	3.53	3.64	3.50
PHIL	3	3.50	3.50	3.60	3.26	3.50	3.33
PHYS	42	3.88	4.00	4.00	3.40	3.50	3.56
POL	11	3.83	4.00	4.00	3.71	3.67	3.71
PSYC	76	3.87	3.91	4.00	3.67	3.71	3.69
SA	25	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.78	4.00	3.83
SAR	26	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.77	3.88	3.77
WS	3	2.50	2.50	4.00	2.83	2.50	2.71

TABLE V

Times for Degree Completion for Graduands Completing Degree Requirements
in 85-3 and Thereafter.

Dept	Pgm	Name	Semester Completed	Semester Started	Semesters in Program
SAR	MAS	P. DOLDEN	853	823	10
SAR	MAS	A. DAVIS	861	833	8
SAR	MAS	M. LEE	863	843	7
SAR		3 Graduands;	8.33 = Average Semesters	in the MAS Program	
SAR	MSC	A. MALLINSON	853	783	22
SAR	MSC	A. MCBRIDE	853	803	16
SAR		2 Graduands;	19.00 = Average Semesters	in the MSC Program	
SAR	PHS	A. LUKE	871	812	18
SAR	PHS	M. REYES	862	782	25
SAR	PHS	E. PETERSEN	863	823	13
SAR	PHS	A. RAHMAN	863	793	22
SAR	PHS	J. WINTERDYK	871	823	14
SAR	PHS	P. HOWARD	862	801	20
SAR	PHS	N. MCNULTY	862	811	17
SAR		7 Graduands;	18.43 = Average Semesters	in the PHS Program	

Totals: 5 Master's Graduands and 7 Ph.D. Graduands

12.60 = Average Semesters in the Master's Program Overall

18.43 = Average Semesters in the PhD Program Overall

ON THE TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE GRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

STATEMENT BY CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS Approved, November 1987

The Canadian Association of Graduate Schools is concerned over the lengthy times taken for many students to complete their graduate degrees. It recognizes the essential role of graduate studies in the creation and dissemination of new knowledge to the benefit of society, as well as the need for the efficient utilization of the resources of society while fulfilling that role. Excessive time taken to complete graduate degrees places an unnecessary drain on the universities and can deprive potential students of opportunities to pursue graduate studies.

The following statements provide specific advice for addressing this problem:

Whereas most of the major scholarships/fellowships available to graduate students in national, provincial or university competitions are tenable for a maximum of 2 years for a Masters degree and 4 years for a Doctoral degree which times are deemed to be sufficient periods for a first-class student to complete these degrees,

and whereas: - most provincial grants to universities for Masters students provide base support for 1.5 years (three terms) or, in a few instances, for 2 years (four terms), and for doctoral students for up to 3 years, with fees charged and residence requirements listed accordingly, but no support thereafter to the university to sustain indirect costs of these students,

and whereas: - postdoctoral awards from outside agencies, appointment criteria for University and Government positions and posts in private sectors all take into account the time taken to complete graduate degrees, with preference given to those who have completed within reasonable time constraints,

and whereas: - research findings made at the beginning of a graduate degree program risk becoming obsolete, scooped or otherwise superseded the longer the program is continued, with attendant risks that examiners will not accept the final submission,

but whereas: - reviews and statistics collected at many universities indicate that almost all sectors take longer than these widely-accepted time frames to complete the thesis degrees, in some sectors much longer on average particularly for the masters degree; and also that an alarming rate of drop-out occurs in many programs,

the Canadian Association of Graduate Schools has concluded that a serious problem exists in the times taken to complete research degrees in Canada, which needs to be addressed by all Graduate Schools and by the various sectors of the university where graduate work is conducted. Conditions vary from place to place and between disciplines, of course, but we

are agreed that remedial measures are needed, and we are convinced that we could and should serve our bright young talents more effectively. The following recommendations represent a distillation of several years of discussion and many documents on reforms undertaken by particular universities, as a consensus of minimal actions that we recommend.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. that the universities through their various responsible sectors shall do everything in their power to facilitate the progress of graduate students through masters and doctoral programs, by:-

a) ensuring the maximum possible opportunities for external and internal awards (Fellowships) for deserving students, as judged by responsible reviews of past and on-going performance,

b) giving top priority to providing graduate students with the facilities and services needed to conduct their studies with minimal delays. Means include maximizing available Assistantships and giving priority to help those students who have demonstrated satisfactory progress and are still within reasonable time to complete their degrees, maintaining library, computer, laboratory facilities etc., open during periods that do not necessarily correspond with needs of other university sectors.

2. that faculties of Graduate Studies and Research do everything in their power to ensure that efficient and effective services are provided to graduate students and faculty alike by:

a) Lobbying to strengthen internal fellowship, scholarship, loan and bursary programs and by informing and requiring students and supervisors to apply for all available external awards,

b) providing efficient and effective services to graduate students, faculty members and research units and minimizing administrative and bureaucratic delays in the processing of applications for admission and financial aid,

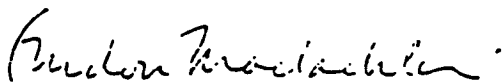
c) making present regulations concerning deadlines, programs and procedures known to every student, supervisor and academic unit at appropriate intervals,

d) implementing special options where warranted to eliminate undue expectations for "mini-doctoral" performance at the Masters level and, in general, tailoring degree demands to the length of time during which a fellowship-quality student can reasonably be expected to finish before the fellowship runs out.

3. that departments strive, within their limits, to provide the resources, program guidelines and personal supervision necessary for reasonable progress of students through graduate programs by:-

- a) providing workspace for graduate students and a community with which to interact, e.g., through regular seminars, student lounge, etc.,
- b) requiring early designation of programs, monitoring faculty who act as research supervisors, and only accrediting or authorizing those who have records of effective assistance to graduate students in completing degrees to continue in this role,
- c) making known program guidelines, requirements, regulations and deadlines in the form of regular bulletins (booklets, memos, handbooks, etc.) issued to graduate students and staff members,
- d) ensuring graduate students of ready access to supervisors and supervisory committees, monitored by regular assessments at which satisfactory progress or remedial measures are recorded and implemented.
- e) requiring conciseness in graduate theses.

Approved at meeting of
Graduate School Representatives in Canada
(CAGS Annual Meeting)
November 6, 1987



Gordon MacLachlan
President, CAGS

REPORT TO SENATE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SENATE GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

FROM JANUARY 1987 TO DECEMBER 1987

Number of Meetings - Six (6)

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee with delegated power from Senate to:-

1. Recommendations for Admission under Special Arrangements. Ten (10) recommendations were considered. Seven (7) recommendations were considered once; one (1) recommendation was considered at three (3) meetings; one (1) recommendation was approved with clarification sought to the satisfaction of the Dean of Graduate Studies; one (1) recommendation was rejected.
2. One Recommendation for Admission was brought forward to the Senate Graduate Studies Committee for consideration. This was rejected.
3. Approved the following changes in the General Regulations - Graduate Studies.

Regulation 1.4.2 be changed

From: Registration

All students should arrive on campus one week before the beginning of classes in each semester. Registration takes place during the week. The course or thesis work for which the student registers must have the approval of his Graduate Program Committee and of his Senior Supervisor once the Senior Supervisor is appointed. Students who are going on leave are required to register.

To: Registration

All students should arrive on campus one week before the beginning of classes in each semester. Registration takes place during that week. The course or thesis work for which the student registers must have the approval of the ~~Chairman~~^{her} of his Graduate Program Committee and of his ^{her} Senior Supervisor once the Senior Supervisor is appointed. Students who are going on leave are required to register.

Regulation 1.8.3 be changed

From: Withdrawal from Courses and from the University

Permission of the Senior Supervisor is required to withdraw from a course. If the Senior Supervisor is not yet appointed, permission of the Chairman of the Graduate Program Committee is required. If such permission is granted, a student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty up to the end of the ninth week of classes in any semester.

To: Withdrawal from Courses and from the University

Permission of the Senior Supervisor and the ~~Chairman~~ of the Graduate Program Committee is required to withdraw from a course. If the Senior Supervisor is not yet appointed, permission of the ~~Chairman~~ of the Graduate Program Committee is required. If such permission is granted, a student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty up to the end of the ninth week of classes in any semester.

Modification of Graduate Regulation 1.9.4

1.9.4 PREPARATION FOR EXAMINATION OF DOCTORAL THESIS

Preparation for the examination of a Doctoral Thesis shall not take place until the thesis is substantially complete and in the format laid down in Appendix A of the General Regulations - Graduate Studies.

At least two months before the proposed date for the thesis examination, the candidate's Supervisory Committee shall make a recommendation concerning the composition of the Examining Committee (in conformity with 1.9.3) and the date of the thesis examination. This recommendation, which shall also include the thesis title, an abstract of the thesis, and a short biography of the proposed External Examiner, shall be sent to the Graduate Program Committee, then to the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee for approval, then to the Senate Graduate Studies Committee for final approval. The recommendation must reach the Dean of Graduate Studies at least five weeks before the examination date. The Dean of Graduate Studies shall invite the External Examiner and provide information on the examination date and procedures.

Modification of Graduate Regulation 1.10.2

1.10.2 CLASSIFICATION OF THE THESIS

Classification of the Thesis

There are four possible outcomes of the thesis defence:

1. The Thesis may be passed as submitted.
2. The Thesis may be passed on the condition that minor revisions be completed to the satisfaction of the Senior Supervisor.
3. The Examining Committee may defer making judgement if it judges that the thesis could pass after additional work by the candidate. A thesis upon which judgement is deferred shall come forward for re-examination within a period specified by the Examining Committee. This re-examination may consist of a formal examination (under Section 1.10.1) or the Committee may reach its decision after reading the revised thesis. The method of re-examination will be specified at the time of the deferral of judgement.
4. The Thesis may be failed. In this case, the candidate is required to withdraw from the University.

The decision of the Examining Committee is by simple majority vote except that the Committee may not pass a thesis or defer its judgement on a thesis without the concurrence of the External Examiner.

4. Graduate Curriculum Changes for the Departments of History, Archaeology, Economics, Psychology, Engineering Sciences and Natural Resources Management.
5. The Senate Graduate Studies Committee wholeheartedly endorsed the establishment of a Graduate Student Centre which would be more than a Reading Room.

6. The Senate Graduate Studies Committee agreed that the capability of pursuing a graduate degree under Special Arrangements should be maintained but that the instructions to applicants should be more specific as to requiring a comprehensive exam at the Ph.D. level and that a student should take seminar courses as opposed to all Special Topics courses and Directed Readings.
7. The Senate Graduate Studies Committee approved new Terms of Reference for Special Arrangements for Graduate Studies.
8. The Senate Graduate Studies Committee approved a change in the deferral period for graduate grades from the last day for receipt of grades in the following semester to the end of the third week of classes in the following semester.
9. The Senate Graduate Studies Committee approved the change in the name of the Graduate Program in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics to the Program in Languages and Linguistics.